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June 11, 2012

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Bremerton receives funding to reduce underage drinking

Bremerton has been selected to receive funding to reduce youth alcohol and other drug use, and create a healthier and safer community environment. The support includes funding for training, technical assistance, and community and school-based prevention services.

Bremerton is one of 15 communities statewide participating in a Prevention Redesign Initiative (PRI), funded by the state Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR). PRI will support this new coalition in partnering with parents, youth, educators, health professionals, law enforcement, faith leaders, and local government. The Bremerton Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition will identify their highest prevention needs, plan and implement evidence-based strategies, leverage local resources and evaluate the impact of selected programs.

"A number of factors were considered in selecting Bremerton for services", said Mary Ellen de la Pena, Kitsap County Prevention Services Coordinator. "These include youth substance abuse, violence and alcohol and other drug related death rates. Significant examples of the community and schools coming together to successfully support the healthy development of youth is another reason Bremerton was selected. The newly formed Bremerton Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition will begin meeting in September. "

Statewide PRI will focus a larger amount of leveraged resources in targeted communities over several years, with the primary goals of reducing underage drinking among 8th and 10th graders, improving academic performance, and reducing juvenile crime. In the next two years, DBHR will expand PRI to identify approximately 50 high-need communities in Washington State.

"Our goal in redesigning and targeting our state prevention services is to leverage enough resources in high-need communities to achieve greater reductions in substance abuse and the harm it causes," said Chris Imhoff, DBHR's Director. "Community leaders are prepared to use these resources to help young people make healthy choices and succeed," added Imhoff.

State and county data from the 2010 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey is available at www.AskHYS.net. Information and tips for parents for preventing underage drinking can be found at www.StartTalkingNow.org.

For more information, contact Mary Ellen de la Pena, Kitsap County Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist at 360/337-4878 or medelape@co.kitsap.wa.us.